

Bills would increase quality of care and improve health outcomes while reducing costs

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Alongside doctors and patients at South Burlington's Aesculapius Medical Center, Welch outlined two bills based on pilot programs and research conducted in Vermont. The patient-focused legislation aims to increase the quality of care and improve health outcomes while containing escalating costs.

Welch's **Blueprint for Health Act of 2009**, based on the innovative Vermont program of the same name, is designed to effectively manage and prevent expensive chronic conditions. The Blueprint program encourages primary care providers to operate their practices as patient-centered medical homes, offering well-coordinated care supported by local, multi-disciplinary teams. Blueprint enables providers to create better health outcomes and to spend more time with patients while encouraging patients to proactively manage their own conditions.

Welch's **Reward Value, Not Volume Act of 2009**, based on pioneering research by the Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice, recognizes that increased spending on health care does not correlate to better health outcomes. This legislation creates "accountable care organizations" whose payment systems reward the quality and efficiency of care, rather than the volume and intensity of services.

"Vermont has long-recognized the need to focus on the quality, affordability and accessibility of health care. The state's proactive efforts to increase patient satisfaction while reducing the unsustainable cost of health care should serve as a model for the nation," Welch said. "I look forward to bringing Vermont's innovative ideas and successful programs to Washington as Congress begins anew the health care reform debate."

Welch was joined at the announcement by Fletcher Allen Health Care chief quality officer Dr.

John Brumsted, who manages FAHC's Blueprint for Health pilot program, and Dr. Jennifer Gilwee, an Aesculapius Medical Center primary care physician who is a participant in the Blueprint program. Welch was also joined by Roberta Proulx, a patient of Dr. Gilwee's, and former State Sen. Jim Leddy, one of the original architects of the Blueprint program.